



MISSING 'YEAR TAB' ON YOUR REAR LICENSE PLATE

The Morro Bay Police Department is experiencing a large number of vehicles on the roadway without the required 'Year tab' on the rear license plate. There could be several reasons for this.

1. The owner simply forgot to put the current 'Year tab' on the plate as required by VC 5204(a). We recommend you do this as soon as you receive your registration. You probably won't get a citation for this, but being stopped and your registration checked will likely be an inconvenienced.

2. Your 'Year tab' is missing because your vehicle is unregistered as required by VC 4000(a)(1). This means that you are likely to be stopped and given a traffic citation for the violation. Or, if parked, you will receive a \$50.00 parking citation.

NOTE: Just because you have been cited does not mean you can continue to operate or park the vehicle on the roadway without registering it. Also, **Very important;** Vehicles on the roadway with the registration expired in excess of six months will be impounded and kept in storage until the vehicle is registered through the Department of Motor Vehicles. The towing and storage makes this a very costly alternative to complying with the vehicle registration law in the first place.

3. Your 'Year tab' is missing because someone has peeled it off and stolen it. With the economy the way it is, we are finding more properly registered vehicles with their "Year tab" missing. At the same time we are finding drivers of vehicles with false evidence of registration on their vehicles in the form of a tab on the wrong vehicle – this is a misdemeanor under VC 4462.5. These folks can be cited or taken to jail and their cars will be impounded.

HANDY HINT: With all the 'Year tab' thefts taking place, we recommend that as soon as you place the current 'Year tab' on your rear license plate that you 'score' it with a razor blade. In other words, take a razor blade and make "X's" across the tab so any thief will quickly see the tab will come off in pieces and they will go on to the next car. Also, don't let 'Year tabs' build up over the years. They can easily be removed. If you can, take off the old tabs before you apply the new one.



COMMON BATH SALTS, A DANGEROUS DRUG

There is a new drug on the market and it is perfectly legal. The substance is found in the common bath salts you would use for a relaxing soak in the tub. It is known as Ivory snow, Red Dove, Bliss, White Lightning, Hurricane Charlie and Vanilla Sky. It is said the effects of the powders are as powerful as abusing methamphetamine.

The drug is the stimulants Mephedrone and Methylenedioxypyrovalerone or MDPV. So far there have been no known cases of the misuse of this substance in Morro Bay. But, law enforcement agencies and poison control centers across the nation say the bath salts are an emerging menace and there is talk of banning their sale. In Morro Bay, we should be aware of the misuse of bath salts, and even plant foods, that are sold legally at convenience stores and on the Internet. These chemicals, when ingested (smoked, inhaled or injected) can cause hallucinations, paranoia, rapid heart rates and suicidal thoughts.

So far, the stimulants aren't regulated by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, but they are facing federal scrutiny. Apparently some of the substances are being shipped from Europe, but origins are still unclear. There's a lengthy process to restrict these types of designer chemicals, including reviewing the abuse data. But it's a process that can take years.

Dr. Mark Ryan, director of the Louisiana poison control center, said he thinks state bans on the chemicals can be effective. He said calls about the salts have dropped sharply since Louisiana banned their sale in January. Ryan said cathinone, the parent substance of the drugs, comes from a plant grown in Africa and is regulated. He said MDPV and mephedrone are made in a lab, and they aren't regulated, because they're not marketed for human consumption. The stimulants affect neurotransmitters in the brain, he said. "It causes intense cravings for it. They'll binge on it three or four days before they show up in an Emergency Room. Even though it's a horrible trip, they want to do it again and again," Ryan said.

The problem has grown nationally in response to the laws restricting the sale of pseudoephedrine, a key ingredient in making methamphetamine. Most of the bath salt users so far have been meth addicts, according to national authorities.

Again, to our knowledge, Morro Bay has not experienced this problem, but 'knowledge' is the key to preparedness and prevention. For more information do a search for "bath salts" at <http://www.justice.gov/dea/index.htm>



DOOR-KNOB LEAFLETS

We received an inquiry from one of our readers saying she was out of town for 9 days and came home to find an advertisement hanging from her front door knob. She was concerned, feeling this indicated no one was home and subjected her to possible theft. She asked if this was legal.

We checked for any law or ordinance that prohibits the hanging of "door-knob advertisements" and could not find any. Basically, the law allows anyone access to your property via a 'normally public route'. In other words, whatever access your postal carrier, FedX or UPS has is considered public unless of course you have a fenced yard. This means that the walkway leading up to your front door is accessible without violating trespass laws; again, unless you have a fenced yard or restrictive signage.

The actual placing of the advertisement on your door-knob would not be considered littering nor in our belief, soliciting. You would have to contact our City Attorney at (805) 772-6200 for more clarification.

The simple remedy we suggest is for "neighbors to watch out for neighbors." In other words, tell your nearby neighbor that you are going to be away for a couple days and have them remove your mail, newspapers and anything else, such as door-knob advertisements that would indicate you are gone.

In our line of work it always amazes us that neighbors do not know each other, let alone coordinate with each other for the good of the neighborhood. One of our officers is fortunate to have neighbors on both sides of him who have keys to his house and he has keys to theirs; in case of an emergency. The other day there was no one home and the officer asked his neighbor to enter his home to take his dog potty. We sincerely hope you have someone like that nearby.